

Testimony to the CT General Assembly Education Committee
Submitted February 28, 2017
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S.B. No. 912 An Act Concerning Revisions to the Staff Qualifications Requirement for Early Childhood Educators

H.B. No. 7155 (RAISED) An Act Requiring the Office of Early Childhood to Develop a Proposed Early Childhood Early Educator Compensation Schedule.

H.B. No. 7035 An Act Implementing the Governor's Budget Recommendations Concerning Education

Chairpersons Fleischmann, Slossberg and Boucher and members of the Education Committee

First, let me thank the Committee for its ongoing support of early childhood education, especially as a means **to close the preparation gap for young children**. High quality early childhood education and early intervention have been demonstrated to **increase child and family outcomes as well as positive cost-benefit of initial investment**.

I offer comments and recommendations on the following bills:

H.B. No. 7155 (RAISED) AN ACT REQUIRING THE OFFICE OF EARLY CHILDHOOD TO DEVELOP A PROPOSED EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATOR COMPENSATION SCHEDULE.

Support passage of this bill.

Early educator compensation and teacher qualifications must be considered in order to have a high quality workforce. A challenge to recruiting and retaining teachers for preschool that meet the BA expectations has been compensation. Qualified teachers frequently leave for higher paying positions in other centers or public schools.

SB 912 AN ACT CONCERNING REVISIONS TO THE STAFF QUALIFICATIONS REQUIREMENT FOR EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATORS. Do NOT support passage of this bill. Propose alternative language to current statutes.

"Houston, we have a problem." Actually we have a really big problem for our children! Research that has been conducted on long term impact of preschool, e.g., Perry Preschool Project, had bachelor and master level teachers with strong professional development requirements. Pre-service and on-going professional development matter.

This is the third time since passing a bill that changes the start date of requiring teachers in state funded programs have a bachelor's degree in early childhood and now we are changing the degree requirements. Would you want to have an accountant or finance person have a bachelor's degree in animal sciences with 12 credits in accounting or finance to handle your finances or taxes? Connecticut has a process for teachers the Early Childhood Teaching Credential (ECTC) that would allow those with a BA in another degree to be qualified if people with another degree wish to teach.

While it seems clear that we have some ways to go in meeting the 2020 deadline, we should not abandon the goal of having qualified teachers working with our young children. **I am very concerned that the qualifications of teachers working with poor children mirrors the factors that contributed to Sheff v O'Neill and CJEF. Our children deserve equity and quality!**

Recommendations for language:

By 2020, teachers with a bachelor's degree in early childhood, child study, child development, or human growth and development from any college in the country that is accredited by their regional accrediting body and by NAEYC or CAEP/NCATE.

Remove the requirement for infant/toddler teachers to have a BA degree.

We don't have research or enough higher education institutions with expertise in infant/toddler. UCONN being the expectation to support this component of the statute.

H.B. No. 7035 AN ACT IMPLEMENTING THE GOVERNOR'S BUDGET RECOMMENDATIONS CONCERNING EDUCATION

- Keep Birth to 3 in the Office of Early Childhood. The program is best aligned with the mission and other home visiting services coordinated there. It is a transdisciplinary educational program not a social service – please make the transfer of funds work
- Do NOT give the State Department of Education control over which student support programs to fund. The legislature created these programs and should keep line item control of them. Also the proposed 50% cut will have a devastating impact to children and families.
- Mitigate the proposed cut to Care4Kids and urge that it be funded at a level to reopen the program to families up to 50% of state median income
- Continue funding for:
 - Even Start
 - Healthy Start
 - Help Me Grow
 - Head Start

Thank you for the consideration.